

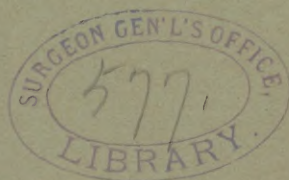
PERRY (S.G.)

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S. G. Perry*

PROFESSIONAL FEES.

BY SAFFORD G. PERRY, D.D.S., NEW YORK, N. Y.

(Read before the Dental Society of the State of New York, May 13, 1896, and reprinted from
the DENTAL COSMOS for October, 1896.)



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THE word fee seems to be of complex origin. It is an Anglo-Saxon word, and in one of its relations is derived from *feoh*, which means cattle. Originally cattle were used as money for purposes of exchange. This is shown in another way by the Latin *pecus*, which means cattle; hence our word pecuniary, which relates to money.

In early English the word fee came from *feh*, which also signified cattle. In the German of early times the word *vieh* (pronounced like fee in English) stood for cattle in the same manner. In the German of to-day it has the same meaning, but has been broadened somewhat by being used as we use the term beasts.

Traced to another root it seems to be derived from *feu* or *feudom*, medieval Latin words relating to tenure of land, which was given as a reward for services rendered the Lord of the Manor, or the Crown. From these words came feudal; hence the feudal system, under which the lords owned the land, but gave the use of it as a reward for fealty to them in times of war. They gave much, or little, the amount being determined by their own will, and without consultation with those to whom it was given.

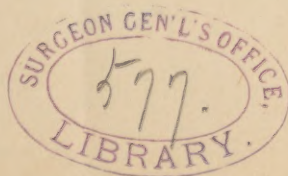
Under the old English law the term fee, as applied to land, implied tenure, or use only. Under our law it implies unrestricted ownership, as expressed by the term "held in fee." Under the feudal system the crown was entitled to the fealty of the lords, and the lords to the fealty of their vassals, or tenants.

The word fealty, in its general use, clearly indicates its origin to have been from the original word fee.

After the Norman conquest, and when England became more civilized, the word fee came into use as expressing reward for services rendered in other ways than in war, and by other means than by use of land.

Barristers and physicians and surgeons were rewarded for their services by fees, which in amounts were still given only in accordance with the pleasure of the giver. Professional men did not yet make out their bills. Nor could they have collected them if they had, for they had no standing in the courts.

In England it was not until 1849 that barristers were accorded rights in law, and were allowed legal standing in the courts. Before that time, unless a special contract had been made, no professional man could collect his fees by force of law. It has been, therefore,



only during Victoria's reign that professional men have been accorded legal standing.

During medieval times the Church was the repository of learning. It has been well said that but for the monasteries, in which learning was preserved, much of the knowledge derived from the ancients would have been lost. There was not at that time much learning in the world outside of them.

Many of the lords and nobles holding high positions could not even write their names. They could only legalize their decrees by stamping them with their seals ; hence the wearing of seal rings.

The monks generally were men of learning. They had some knowledge of science and medicine, and in addition to their religious ministrations they applied their knowledge for the benefit of the rich as well as for the poor. For this, as well as for their ecclesiastical functions, they received fees which were voluntarily given them. The church did not, and does not, allow a fee to be exacted. A minister who performs a marriage ceremony, or a funeral service, to-day is given a voluntary fee as in the early times.

The giving of fees can also be traced back to ancient Rome. In the practice of the law, when an advocate appeared for a client he did so for honor. If he was given a reward it was called an honorarium. It was not given as a present, but as a mark of honor. It was not given as payment, but as an expression of gratitude which could not be paid in money.

Long after this period in Rome, and still later in England, when reward by fees became more common, payment of them was made before they were earned. This was to eliminate all interest in the case beyond that of trying it on its merits. Any bargain made beforehand depending on the issue of the case was considered dishonorable. This, in the past, did much to keep the bar above reproach. A retaining fee is exacted and given to-day before the case is tried, but not for the same reason. It is required as an evidence of good faith on the part of the client, and to pay for the preliminary preparation of the case before trial, and also to secure the services of the lawyer against his employment by the other side. It is allowed for in the final settlement.

In this way the word fee has come down to us in the past, with its different meanings and applications, and as used to-day it has probably a wider range than ever before. It is not altogether a satisfactory word for the use of professional men for that reason. But it has grown into the language and probably will not be displaced. In some respects it has fallen to base uses, for men now not only fee their servants as a reward for service performed, but they fee their way through the world, hoping thereby to get better service, and to gain an advantage over the neighbor who does not resort to that practice. This selfish and pernicious habit has grown to enormous proportions in our modern life.

A generous fee given for an honest service is without reproach, but a fee given beforehand in order to secure a better service than is accorded to a neighbor becomes a bribe, and is degrading to the one who gives and the one who receives.

But we are not so much concerned with the word fee in its objectionable sense ; we are more interested in its higher and nobler use, and this will be found in its application to professional life.

In the early days, as before indicated, even professional men received only what was given them. They were not consulted, or, if they were, they had little to say in determining the amount of their fees. It was at a time in the world when might was right. Knowledge had not yet asserted itself. It was tolerated, but it was not supreme. If learning was honored in Rome, in the Middle Ages, it was not potent in England, for that country had not yet emerged from semi-barbarism.

To-day the conditions are all changed. Now knowledge is power. Right is mighty and will prevail. The advance of civilization has set up new standards, and we no longer look back for guidance in formulating our rules of action. We look about us in the vital present, or forward in the ideal future, for an answer to the question of what we shall do, and why and how we shall do it. In this way, and in this way only, shall we find the basis for the establishment of a just and comprehensive system of professional fees.

To-day the professional man himself is the most competent judge of the value of his own services, and to him is left by common consent the power to decide what the compensation shall be.

The lawyer no longer needs to look back to the time when he interpreted the law to suit his sovereign.

To-day he interprets it for him, and His Majesty is wise only as he heeds the interpretation.

The surgeon no longer looks back to the example of the barber, whose red and white pole on every street reminds of the time when it was an emblem of cupping, and leeching, and blood-letting.

Nor does the physician refer to the time when his ancestor, the medicine-man, with a beating of tom-toms, invoked the spirits of the air and practiced the art of witchcraft, to cure the patients who were only little less ignorant than himself.

To-day the question is, what does a man know and what can he do?

If he can demonstrate his knowledge and his skill, the purse-strings of the world are open to him, and he can take his reward without waiting to have it bestowed upon him.

And the world acknowledges the justice of this, because, in modern life, there is no power so great as that of knowledge.

All down the ages the current has been setting in this direction, augmenting and increasing as man's activities have widened and his subjugation of the forces of Nature has extended. The whole world to-day is watching, with bated breath, for the discovery that shall follow that of the Roentgen ray, and it is ready to pour its treasure into the lap of him who can add one more fact to the sum total of knowledge already tabulated.

The growth of what we will call the fee system has been a gradual evolution. It has undergone changes from time to time that have brought about readjustments in accordance with new conditions that have existed in the world until it has finally come to be generally acknowledged as a sort of code, unwritten it may be, yet resting securely upon the idea that a professional man is the best judge of the value of his own services, and containing the elastic quality that is essential to satisfy the demands of educated men. Knowledge makes men free. It gives them the freedom of authority. The world is being

peopled with new kings. The man of science is a king who reigns supreme in a kingdom not subject to the disintegrating influences that are slowly, but surely, destined to sweep the old monarchies off the face of the earth. All down the ages kings have boasted that they ruled by divine right. It has been the cheekiest claim that man has ever made since he emerged from his tadpole existence. The German emperor, William the First, voiced this claim on all convenient occasions, and yet he was but a child in the hands of his physicians; and his son Frederick, with all Europe at his feet, in his fatal illness sought help only from men of science. And his haughty and imperious son, the present Kaiser, knows there is one man in all the world he must obey,—his doctor!

The professional man, at last, is the one who rules by divine right,—a right based upon his intelligence, which alone invests him with divine authority. It gives him the right to impose the conditions under which he will extend his services to his fellow-men.

There is no standard by which to gauge the value of his knowledge or his skill. It must be done in the supreme court of his own intelligence. It cannot be measured, or weighed, nor can it be estimated by hours or days. It is subject to no conditions. Therefore, there must be individual liberty in imposing fees. It does not follow from this that men may exact unjust fees. This individual liberty is the right only of those who possess knowledge in its largest sense,—knowledge which cultivates in them a sensitive conscience, enabling them to appreciate justice, and develops in them a tender heart, leading them to be helpful to their kind.

These qualities combined make the professional man a supreme judge in the highest sense, and one from which there can be no appeal. It does not affect the argument to contend that these conditions of mind and heart are not often found. If we are to search for a fundamental rule that shall be our unfailing guide, we can only find it in the highest qualities to which man has yet attained. It will be a rule that will not permit an unreasonable fee to be exacted by a man who has an exaggerated opinion of his own attainments and abilities, nor will it be one that will tolerate an inadequate one, imposed by a man who is lacking in self-respect, and whose tendency is to belittle himself and his profession. Nor will it for a moment tolerate the liberty of a man who takes advantage of his membership in a liberal profession to impose an unjust fee upon a confiding person who has no means of gauging him, except by the fact of his being a member of that liberal profession.

And the world to-day takes this view, and willingly sustains professional men in making their fees in accordance with their own ideas of what is fair and just. And this very fact imposes upon professional men a condition the most sacred of any in professional life. They must not only be competent to fulfill their duties to those who put themselves unreservedly in their hands, but they must be scrupulously careful not to abuse that confidence by securing unjust fees.

If one will stop for a moment to consider the full import of this, he will more fully appreciate the tremendous progress that has been made by the race since medieval times. Lecky, in his remarkable book on the History of European Morals, lays down the rule

that morals are to be judged not by the outward pretensions of a nation, but by the manner in which morality is actually realized among its people. Judged by this standard, there is no more significant and hopeful fact in our modern life than the one that professional men are allowed, without question, to make their own fees. It indicates in one sense to what a degree morality is realized among people in their every-day life at the present time.

It implies a sense of honor that lifts professional life above the degrading and demoralizing influences that in our modern civilization go side by side with all that is best in human nature.

Here, then, I think we have found the secure foundation upon which the system of fees that shall be charged by professional men must be founded. The central fact to be considered is, How much have we benefited the person who has placed himself in our charge? There are other factors, but this is the one of greatest importance. The time spent in fitting one's self for the discharge of professional duties makes the second one.

Experience, which brings the ripened judgment, makes the third,—though this may be only an extension of the second,—and the time and effort given make the fourth. But the first is the one that leads all the rest.

In a world in which there is ignorance and weakness and disease, the first duty of a professional man is to eliminate those conditions, as far as possible, and the measure of his success will be, for the most part, the just measure of his reward. If it does not all come to him in money, it will come to him in consciousness of duty done, and that often may be worth more than money. In the net-work of human relations no man can live for himself alone, and no professional man can labor earnestly for his fellow-men without receiving much in the way of reward that will never appear on his day-book or ledger.

There is a humanizing quality in professional work that lifts it above the work of buying and selling, and above the task of controlling the forces of nature. To be of service to a human being is to perform a noble task, and one in which a man is worthy of his hire. The physician who can save a man's life, the surgeon who can repair his injuries, and the lawyer who can make him secure in the possession of his earnings, and the minister who can develop and direct his spiritual nature, have done a service that cannot be wholly paid for in money.

Feeling certain of the truth of the principle we have laid down as a foundation for the establishment of professional fees, we now come to the consideration, more particularly, of dental fees.

Assuming dentistry to be a branch of the healing art, it is readily seen that it must be subject to the same rules that govern the department of medicine and surgery. The educated dentist of to-day is a professional man in the fullest sense of the term. His education has been such that he can be considered in no other light. He is so recognized by the state, and laws for his protection have been passed, as has been done for physicians and surgeons. There is no part of his work which should not be considered from a strictly professional standpoint. The question of his fees must be determined, then, in the same manner as they are determined by physicians and surgeons. If his responsibility is not as great in degree, it is the same in kind.

Considered in detail, there are quite a number of factors that have to be taken into account by the physician or the surgeon or the lawyer in making up accounts for services rendered. The physician considers the gravity, or unusual character of the disease for which unusual abilities are required. The surgeon, in estimating the value of his operations, follows the same general rule. For very difficult and dangerous operations requiring the highest order of skill, by common consent, he is justified in demanding more than for the performance of operations that the average man can safely and successfully perform. The lawyer is governed by the same general principle. If his long experience and great abilities make it safe to intrust vast interests to his care, he is entitled to charge a correspondingly large fee. Of course, the time given to the case is taken into account, particularly that spent upon it by assistants,—but it is of minor importance in many instances. The same principle should apply in dental practice.

And yet, after all that has been said of the higher privileges of professional life, it must be stated that, practically, in every community, the law of supply and demand operates in regulating professional fees, as it operates in fixing the values of commodities in the business world. Though a man be overweighted with wisdom, if he is not in demand he cannot command higher fees. The man who is wanted by the public is the one who can make his own terms. If he is without knowledge or skill he will not be wanted, so that we are brought back to the original proposition that it is knowledge that gives men power and makes them free.

But there must be some acknowledged system, and the doctor for his ordinary work charges so much for a visit—within certain limits of distance—and so much for an office call. The surgeon does the same. I am told by an eminent lawyer that formerly, to a greater extent than now, fees were imposed for the drawing of different documents, and for particular items of work, but at the present time ordinary office work is estimated, for the most part, on the basis of time.

Of course, in the specialty of dentistry the same need has been felt for a system applicable to the detail of ordinary office work. This has resulted in the establishment of two systems, that of charging a fee for each separate operation and that of charging by the time consumed.

The real object of this paper is a comparison of these two systems, and all that has gone before is only preliminary to that comparison. But the consideration of the subject is certain to lead us into a tangle of contradictions from which it will not be easy to emerge with absolutely unassailable conclusions.

In the early days of dental practice, as far as we have been able to learn, it was customary to charge for each particular operation, or, rather, for each particular filling; the cleaning of the teeth, treatment of the gums, and sometimes even the extraction of teeth being "thrown in." This practice prevailed even after dentistry, by the establishment of the first dental college, became a distinct profession, although there is some evidence to show that unspecified fees were charged for professional services by those who were most influential in thus lifting dentistry to a higher plane.

This system of charging separately for fillings has come down to the present day, amplified by charges also for various other minor operations in the mouth, and is the one adopted, probably, by the majority of dentists throughout the world to-day. It is a system possessing much merit. This must be true, or it would not be so generally adopted. But it has some serious objections, which will be considered later.

One reason why it is so generally adopted can be found, doubtless, in the fact that it has been so long employed. It is natural and easy for men to follow in the beaten track. Children imitate their parents, and parents imitate their ancestors. Whatever comes down by tradition commands respect from many. Only here and there will be found a bold spirit who ventures to mark out a new path.

The early dentist itemized his bill; it could be made more impressive and convincing by a long list of separate operations. The same is done to-day by men who are called good business men. I once heard a fine operator say he considered that he made his bills more impressive by giving many details. The system of charging by the operation, however, is one entitled to great respect, and in a certain way is in line with the law we have tried to lay down in reference to the estimation of the value of one's own skill.

A man of large experience and great skill may be able to put in a filling in shorter time and do it better than another, and for that he is entitled to charge a distinct and higher fee. And a filling, like a doctor's visit, represents a distinct thing, and so affords a seemingly real basis for the fee. It affords something tangible for the lay mind to grasp, and thus saves the trouble of educating the patient to an understanding of the higher meaning of professional service.

It may also be satisfactory to a conscientious man, who, considering that he is to charge for a distinct filling, may feel that it should be made a work of art, and he will take time enough to complete it to his own satisfaction, even if he is not to be liberally paid for it. If the filling is very small and not worth the minimum fee, he will offset it with a larger filling for which he will not charge more than his minimum fee. For large fillings that require more time and effort, and difficult ones that require more skill, he will increase the fee in accordance with his own judgment. This method enables him to work slowly or rapidly as he may feel inclined. He may stop to talk for a few moments with his patient, or he may leave the office for a little time, without affecting the result. If there is a loss of time it is his own loss, as it is fair to assume that the time of many of his patients is not nearly as valuable as his own. He is his own master. The system is elastic, and well suited for men of certain temperaments.

There is a certain dignity about it that satisfies a man who respects his calling, and believes the teeth are of incalculable value, and, that every operation that will help to save them is worthy of being performed most carefully, and should, therefore, be separately charged for.

There are, however, some serious objections to this system when considered from another standpoint. The same set of conditions can be made to assume an entirely different aspect by following another line of reasoning.

It may seem petty and commercial to keep an account of every little filling and to magnify every little operation. It may be debasing to think of what one is to get for each thing he does. The large, free, manly sense of benefit rendered by generous service is forgotten in the effort to keep an account of the little things done.

The adding up is like the task of a clerk in a country store. It distracts attention from the professional aspect of the case. It holds out temptations to those who are not conscientious. A man lacking in love for his work and anxious to make it profitable may linger over a minute filling in order to seem to deserve the minimum fee, and will hasten and slight the large filling in order to put in as many as possible in the shortest time. If there were only fillings of fairly uniform size to be done, there could be no fairer way than to charge for the operation. Each filling would be something tangible, like a physician's visit or an office prescription.

But the work to be done in the mouths of most patients consists of a thousand and one little things that can hardly be described and enumerated, such as the preparation of cavities, the placing of temporary fillings, removal of tartar, treatment of gums, treatment and removal of pulps, cleansing of roots, filling of minute fissures and pits that require but a few moments each, and the repairing of old fillings.

The great improvements in modern methods, by which operations are more rapidly and more perfectly performed, render an adherence to the old standards of enumeration unfair and also unwise, for, as Dr. Jack long since pointed out, the advantages from this source must not be reaped entirely by the operator, but must be shared with the patient. No system can long stand that does not recognize this fact.

The products of our laboratories, such as artificial crowns and partial and complete dentures, which are entities in themselves, may, perhaps, be charged for as such, but the correction of irregularities can be justly charged for only under the head of professional services.

The system of charging by time is one that has many advantages, and it seems to be one that is growing in favor in these modern times. But it has also serious objections, which will be noted later.

Time is an important element in our modern life. Never before in the history of the world did it count for as much as at the present day, and never before was it so taken as a standard to gauge and measure human endeavor. Emerson said, there is no gift so great as the gift of a day. The subjugation of the electric current has accelerated the pace so that we may now say there is no gift so great as the gift of an hour! If human life is lengthening, as statistics show, and is growing more intense, as we all know, it is easy to see that much has been added to the possibility of human attainment during a lifetime, and it is only natural that the day or the hour should be taken as the measure of human labor. It seems only natural, therefore, in the readjustments that are constantly going on, that professional men, in seeking for a more convenient means of estimating the details of their services, should adopt the hour system.

For the dentist it is convenient, and for his patients it is easily understood. It has one very great advantage—almost the greatest

of all—in the fact that the patient and operator start off with a distinct understanding. Those who wish to know to what extent they are incurring indebtedness, while their work is being done, can easily tell by keeping an account of the time. In this way there may be saved the surprise that often is felt at the presentation of an unexpectedly large bill, because most patients, without keeping, as far as they can, their own account, do not realize how much time has been given them. It is a system that, when rigidly enforced, insures promptness in keeping appointments on the part of both operator and patient, and in a great measure it removes that *bête noir* of a busy professional man's life, the habit many patients have of consuming time by indulging in endless and aimless talk. It gives to the operator a sense of freedom in the performance of his work. He has nothing to think of but how he can make his operations most perfect. Knowing that he will be paid, like a man who is pensioned, he has no concern except to do his work in the best manner.

Haydn, who was practically pensioned by Count Esterhazy, had nothing to think of but the composition he was to place on the breakfast table the next morning, and to this fact can doubtless partly be ascribed the happy, sunny character of his beautiful music, which will ever be a joy to the world. By this system an operator may indulge in the pleasure that comes from doing work well, with the certainty of being paid for it, and at the same time he can feel that, by taking plenty of time, he is conferring a greater benefit upon his patient. There can be no question that this system has done much toward placing American dentistry in the leading position it occupies in the world to-day, since in America it was first adopted. It is applicable and just as applied to nervous and unmanageable patients and to ungovernable children, since it secures to the operator compensation for his time, even though he is not able to do much work. This certainty of compensation is a professional man's right. It is due him in return for a life spent in preparation for his work. It justifies him also in making a charge for appointments not kept. This system avoids the petty consideration and enumeration of particulars, and this, it seems to me, quite offsets the charge sometimes made by those who oppose it, on the ground that it is degrading for a professional man to put himself on a par with a day-laborer, whose work is estimated by the hour or the day. All men who work, either with their hands or their brains, are laborers, and it is no more degrading to estimate work by the hour than by the piece. The true difference is shown by the difference between the professional man's ten dollars per hour and the laboring man's one dollar and a half per day. The true professional man cannot be degraded by such childish reasoning as that.

In considering the objections to the time system, it is possible to again put a different construction on the same set of conditions.

We meet at once the greatest of all objections, and that is that skill cannot be estimated by time. As stated before, it is something that does not allow of any such measurement. It can only be estimated by its results, and they may be entirely independent of time.

The man of age and experience must not be put upon the same plane with the youngster whose spurs are not yet won; and yet, in the estimation of the unthinking public, that is the tendency of the

time system. And it also imposes conditions that are not fair from the fact that men are not always in uniform health.

A man may sometimes do in an hour what at another time, owing to physical disability, he might not be able to do in an hour and a half, or even two hours. One way in which this may be overcome is by Dr. Jack's system of charging by what he considers a fair hour's service, which may sometimes require an hour and a half of time. And this brings us back to the point of the professional man being, after all, the only judge of the value of his own services.

Another serious objection to the time system is that it imposes a system of half-conscious bondage. It implies a constant watching of the clock, and an ever-present remembrance that on a ten-dollar-an-hour basis, every minute is equivalent to over sixteen cents! This fact hangs over a conscientious man like a cloud through which no ray of light ever comes. It is the refinement of the master's lash, ever goading him to constant work. There is no escape from it, and it must be counted as one of the unconscious factors that wears a professional man out. It lessens the force of the former statement that there is great pleasure in taking abundant time in order to do the work well.

An unconscientious man may not feel this. In fact, if he has not a full practice he may think that every minute gained by spinning his work out adds sixteen cents to his income. Another objection to the system may arise from striving to do a great many fillings in the hour's time, in order to be considered a rapid operator, and therefore not a high-priced one, even though having a high rate per hour. This must inevitably lead to the performance of poor work, for there is no greater truth than that "haste means waste." Still another objection to the time system is that patients also watch the clock, thereby constantly reminding the operator that he must not lose a minute.

Dr. Corydon Palmer once said to me, with the feeling of the true artist, "I will not allow a patient to snap a watch on me!"

Then, too, there may exist an element of unfairness arising from the fact that one man may be orderly and methodical, and have trained assistance at the chair, and yet, in an unthinking community, may not be able to command a higher rate per hour than one who works alone, and with old-fashioned instruments, which he keeps in a careless manner.

If the time system is adopted, it seems to me that the only way in which it can well be applied is to have no fixed charge for an hour's service, but to have a wide range between the minimum and the maximum charge. For instance, instead of making the charge ten dollars per hour, let it be from eight to twelve dollars.

After comparing and contrasting the two systems, we have found that each possesses marked advantages, and each embodies distinct disadvantages.

How, then, shall we decide between the two? This cannot be done in an arbitrary manner, as, in addition to the many difficulties we have found, the matter of individual temperament plays an important part, and there must be allowed great freedom in deciding a question that is so personal in its nature. On general principles it can be said that a man who can be trusted to perform professional work can be trusted to make the charge for it.

In my own practice, and in reply to inquiries as to my fees, I

have always taken this ground. I never speak of fees when it can be avoided. I want to feel, and I want my patients to feel, that the work is of first importance, and that the fee, as a matter of course, will be what it should be.

If patients cannot come to me with this feeling of confidence, I prefer not to have them come to me at all. I have recognized the fact that there is an advantage in a fee card, since it enables the patient and operator to start off with a distinct understanding, and in the last twenty-five years I have prepared at least half a dozen, all based upon the idea of a combination of the two systems; but I never had but one printed, and that, many years ago, I withdrew after a few months' use. I have never had the courage since, when it came to the point, of having another printed. Although I believe it would be helpful from a business standpoint, I could not overcome the feeling that it was not quite the thing for a professional man to do.

As far as possible we must rise above the conditions indicated in the two systems, and, taking a wider view of professional life and its obligations, must exercise the liberty before spoken of as the supreme prerogative of educated men. We must shake off the traditions of the past, and, discarding our appointment cards containing a price list of our fees and our itemized bills, place ourselves upon the plane occupied by physicians and surgeons, who never stoop to such a practice. If we claim for our profession, as we do, that it is a specialty of medicine, we must adopt the methods employed by the parent profession, not only in our intercourse, but in the method of determining and indicating our fees. The comparison of the two systems shows how difficult it is to evolve any comprehensive rule that shall be applicable to all cases, so that, if there were not the higher professional consideration to guide us, it would be still difficult to establish any system that would be complete in itself, and that could be given to the world in any tabulated form. We must have a system; that is admitted, and I think it will be found in a consistent combination of the two we have considered, but we must follow the lead of the parent profession and not publish it to the world. It would be a surprise to us to receive from our family physician a card stating that visits will be made at such a rate, or office calls received for so much, or a notice from his brother, the surgeon, stating that legs would be cut off at such a price! A new patient has the right to inquire regarding our fees, and we should be prepared to give a frank outline of them; but it is not in keeping with true professional dignity to thrust them constantly upon the notice of patients.

Nor is it quite in keeping with that fine relationship that should exist between the professional man and his patient. There is an old saying that the world estimates us in accordance with our own estimate of ourselves. If we retain the appointment card, with the list of prices, or the rate per hour, we shall also inevitably retain in the minds of our patients the memory of our origin.

Our profession did not branch off from medicine as a distinct specialty, receiving from the first the fostering care all the later specialties have received. It has independently, and by its own efforts, grown up to it, and has compelled recognition even in spite of the neglect shown it in the past, and the coolness shown it still in

some quarters. Let us, therefore, eliminate as far as we can all suggestion of the past, when, single handed, we did the best we could, knowing even then that in the fullness of time a profession founded upon such a universal need of humanity must receive just recognition and appreciation. Claiming for ourselves to-day what we know the world grants us, the honor of forming one of the most useful specialties of medicine, and in the fullness of that knowledge standing upon the high ground we have won, and accepting the methods of our adopted parent, whom we honor but do not ape, let us look forward to the time when a fee card and an itemized bill shall be a memory of the past.

Assuming that we belong to the society of modern kings, let us take on the manners of the true king, and believing in ourselves and in our mission in the world, let us exercise the prerogative of those who labor and those who rule by divine right.

With this rule to guide us we shall become free, and rising above the details of our daily work, and putting aside this microscopic study of all its conditions, we shall make our charges and send our bills for professional services, and for those alone.

